3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

775 In this description of an after life, there was a marked mixture of ideas. The idea of multiple souls is Siouan, the rest is more or less common over most of the region.

776 821 As usual in the plains area every natural phenomenon and unaccountable event was mystery or medicine, and the medicine idea played the usual important part in all their religious customs. Thunder was ascribed to the familiar thunder-bird, the glitter of whose eyes dug a path through the clouds for the rain and caused the lightning.[1] Solitary claps of thunder were ascribed to a huge turtle which lived in the clouds. The rainbow was said to be a spirit which accompanies the sun and which shows itself when the sun retires for the night. The aurora borealis was said to be the fire kindled at an assembly of the great medicine men and warriors of the northern nations, over which they cooked their dead enemies in huge pots.[2] They had several beliefs about the stars—that of the Sioux, that each star is a man, and when a child is born the star comes down and when he dies it returns; also that a multitude of supernatural beings existed in the stars to which sacrifices and prayers [787] were offered. Dreams were of very great importance and governed nearly all their acts.

789 843 There were many small personal superstitions or mysteries. One man told Maximilian that he could turn a snowball into a white stone, another claimed that his nose always bled if he picked up his pipe by the bowl. There were many signs of good and bad luck. A pregnant woman was considered to bring luck at the game of Skohpe. The medicine men told them that if a clay image of an enemy were made with a needle or quill in it for a heart, and were placed at the foot of some medicine structure, that enemy would die. A pregnant woman brings bad luck to her husband in hunting. Many of the Mandans believed that they had some animal, as a buffalo, turtle or frog in them; the women had a dance when they thought an ear of corn was in them, which the dance caused to come out.[3] There were a number of other superstitions of this sort, mostly common to all the plains tribes. One more notable might be mentioned, however, that of building the fire with two sticks crossed in the center, 372

[1] Ibid., p. 422. [2] Ibid., p. 423. [3] Ibid., p. 463.